



Massachusetts Parole Board News

November, 2006

The first legislation in the United States authorizing parole was enacted in Massachusetts in 1837. The duties of the first parole officers included helping prisoners find jobs and providing them with tools, clothing, and transportation at state expense. Although in the past 175 years there have been numerous legislative changes affecting parole in Massachusetts, our core mission and objective remain essentially the same.

Today, the Massachusetts Parole Board is an agency within the Executive Office of Public Safety. We have the primary responsibility of identifying those parole eligible offenders for whom there is sufficient indication that confinement has served its purpose, setting appropriate conditions for parole, and enhancing public safety through the responsible reintegration of these individuals into the community.

Massachusetts Parole Board
Executive Office of Public Safety



Parole Seeks Family-centered Solutions

"Best practice" in White House Drug Control Strategy introduced to agency staff

Family Justice, Inc. the New York-based agency known for its "Bodega Model" for providing community-based support to offenders and their families, has been training more than 100 Massachusetts Field Parole Officers, Institutional Parole Officers, victim services staff, managers, and Department of Correction staff under a grant

obtained by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety [EOPS]. Family Justice stresses the idea that offenders should be recognized within



Hearing Examiner and former Parole Board member Joyce Hooley [left] with Parole Board member Thomas Merigan at a party this month for Ms. Hooley's retirement [more on pg. 4]

their family context, or web of connections to loved ones, and that law enforcement should build on the rehabilitative potential afforded by positive

family interactions.

Family Justice has been working with EOPS for 18 months to bring the family-based Bodega Model to four of the agency's parole office/Regional Reentry Centers [RRC's]: in Quincy, Mattapan, Worcester, and Springfield. Four trainings were recently conducted at the Parole Board's central office in Natick,

intended to fully prepare officers to implement the tools of the Bodega Model in daily practice.

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Enhanced Electronic Monitoring of Parolees with Global Positioning System

Parole is using global positioning systems technology to electronically monitor certain parolees designated by Parole Board members. This monitoring reduces the parolee's risk to enter any "exclusion zones,"— schools, playgrounds, or a victim's neighborhood, for example. If the parolee leaves his designated zone or becomes unreachable, parole staff are notified by Probation Department employees, and are immediately dispatched.

A joint effort between probation and parole staff, the electronic monitoring program began in spring, 2005.

The Parole Board may set electronic monitoring as a special condition of a parolee's release if warranted by the nature of his or her crime. In such cases, the Parole Board may judge that an offender is ready for the rehabilitative potential of living in the community, so long as he or she is prevented from entering certain locations.

While the Parole Board is responsible for establishing the parolee's inclusion, or approved zone, and exclusion, or stay away zones, these zones can be amended by a parole officer with the Board's approval. Parolees who are electronically monitored wear an ankle bracelet that determines their location through the global positioning system [GPS]. The bracelet transmits a signal [continued on pg. 4]

Chairman's Column

By Parole Board Chairman Maureen E. Walsh

"The way in which we interact with parolees and their families can be incredibly helpful to the joint success of both the family and the offender."

-Parole Board
Chairman
Maureen Walsh

Happy holidays! I hope that everyone had a happy and healthy Thanksgiving and that the upcoming holidays will be enjoyable for all.

This month, I chose to highlight a very important project that the Massachusetts Parole Board, under the leadership of Tina Hurley, has worked on diligently for the past 18 months. Tina has been the project manager with an entity called Family Justice that is based in New York and has been working in partnership with the Department of Correction and Parole to enhance the way in which we, as criminal justice entities, address family issues in the reentry process. This truly is considered to be a "cutting edge" issue on the reentry front, and we are grateful for an opportunity to work with such a talented group of professionals.

In parole, we have long known that family is a very important ingredient in an offender's success when reintegrating back into the community. On the other hand, however, families can also hinder an offender's chance of success if he or she is going back to an environment that is negative and harmful. This agency directly connects with and impacts families on a daily basis, whether in the context of parole decisions made by Board Members, the supervision of an offender in the community by a Field Parole Officer, or the counseling and advocating for victims and their families by the Victim Service Unit. We know that our influence, whether positive or negative, can have a lasting effect on these many families in the Commonwealth.

In a very simple analysis, Family Justice seeks to "draw on the unique strengths of families and neighborhoods to break cycles of involvement with the criminal justice system." The basic concept is that people, whether incarcerated or not, are most likely to change for the people that mean the most to them: their families. Therefore, the approach that governmental agencies take when supporting and supervising offenders in the community should be carefully analyzed through this lens. In other words, although a Parole Board Member may make decisions and place conditions of supervision based upon what is in the parolee's best interest, and the Field Parole Officer will supervise accordingly, the parolee most likely will be motivated to change not because we are ordering them to do so. Instead, their motivation to change comes from their desire to maintain their family relationships and not disappoint the people that mean the most to them. They are more likely to avoid letting down their mother, son, wife, or grandmother, than the Parole Board. Therefore, the way in which we interact with parolees and their families can be incredibly helpful to the joint success of both the family and the offender.

I am proud of the work that Tina Hurley and the group of Parole and DOC staff have accomplished over the past 18 months. During the next few weeks, Family Justice will be returning to Massachusetts and sharing their thoughts, concerns, analysis and interviews of those incarcerated. Over 100 parole staff will be trained. The purpose of this workshop is to



improve the delivery of services to parolees and families in need of help; to look at newly developed tools and methodologies that promote change; and to encourage the inclusion of the family in the reentry process as a solution rather than a problem.

Learning what Family Justice has to offer may require some changes in the way we do business at Parole. These changes may be simple, but meaningful, such as revisions to some of the forms that we routinely use to be more sensitive to family issues. These changes could also be extremely complex, such as involving ourselves in a relational inquiry tool. Whatever the degree of change, both individually in the way we approach our job, and as a public safety agency in the way we address family justice issues, I am sure that our work in this area will be both meaningful and improve the lives of others.

Agency provides parole with tools to help families make a difference in offender rehabilitation *(continued from pg. 1)*

To gauge the amount of work already being done with families by the agency, Family Justice spent about six months interviewing 22 female parolees and inmates, and administering questionnaires to parole officers at the four participating parole office/RRC's. This provided Family Justice and parole with "a snapshot of what is happening," said Christine Toner, Senior Training Associate for Family Justice, who helped lead the data collection process and conduct the trainings. Family Justice is not trying to introduce something entirely new to the agency, she said, but to enhance existing practices for interviewing, gathering information, and assisting parolees and ex-offenders served by Parole.

Family Justice was originally contracted by EOPS to work with the female offender population, but the parameters of the project have since expanded to include male offenders, consistent with the majority of Family Justice programs which focus on offenders of both sexes.

Parole's questionnaire results demonstrate that the majority of staff believe families are a good source of information about offenders, especially when it comes to substance abuse treatment, medical concerns, parenting, and childcare issues, and family violence history.

From the offender's perspective, the data revealed that the word "family" has a different meaning for each inmate/parolee, and that the definition should be expansive enough to include coworkers, friends, or fellow members of a church or



Managerial staff, including Chief of Field Services Mike Brown [left], and Parole Board Member Daniel Dewey, are trained in the use of a new "risk assessment tool" to more accurately evaluate the level of danger an offender may pose to the community.

spiritual community.

During the training, Ms. Toner stressed that interaction with the criminal justice system is only one aspect of an offender's life, and the mechanisms, problem-solving skills, and decision-making processes that work well for individuals and their families should be viewed by parole as a set of resources to enhance the effectiveness of community supervision. It can be more productive, she suggested, to view offenders as capable of being persuaded to pursue positive goals, rather than to view them as inherently evil, predatory, dysfunctional, or dependent.

Two key elements of Family Justice's "Bodega Model" are the "Genogram" and the "Ecomap." The Genogram is a family tree that demonstrates the nature of the relationships among family members, and the Ecomap provides a broader

view of the connections between the individual and the larger community.

Ms. Toner displayed Ecomaps created for the four participating parole offices/Regional Reentry Centers. The maps depicted the office in the center, like the sun, with the agencies and organizations it interacts with revolving around it like planets.

Areas of tension and conflict between parole and other entities were depicted by a jagged line. The Ecomaps reflected the expansive connections each parole office has forged within its community: with public housing, police, shelters, hospitals, drug treatment centers, the courts, probation, career centers, MassHealth, rape crisis centers, and the Department of Transitional Assistance among others.

Family Justice was founded in 2001, having emerged from a project begun by Carol Shapiro, a social entrepreneur and criminal justice reformer who now serves as the Executive Director.

Ms. Shapiro's original project was known as "La Bodega de la Familia," a family support agency which occupied an abandoned storefront in the lower east side of New York City. In 1999, a partner-

ship between La Bodega and the New York State Division of Parole was formalized, and parole officers were assigned to work with people in La Bodega's programs.

In February, 2002, the Bodega Model was cited as a "best practice" in the White House Drug Control Strategy. In addition to EOPS and the New York State Division of Parole, Family Justice has collaborated with the Chicago Housing Authority and the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission.

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Parole Board member Deborah McDonagh [left] and Joyce Hooley, a former Board member and Hearing Examiner at Ms. Hooley's retirement party this month.

GPS tracking for parolees [continued]

...to a cell phone and a GPS tracker on a belt. The GPS tracker is linked with United States Department of Defense satellites that send information about the offender's whereabouts every five minutes to the electronic monitoring center operated by probation staff. If the GPS tracker shows that the parolee is in an exclusion zone or fails to receive a signal or reading for at least 15 minutes, a probation employee will call the parolee on the cell phone and ask him to go outside to establish a new satellite connection. If the parolee does not respond to the cell phone call, or reestablish a satellite connection within 15 minutes, the probation employee will contact the supervising parole officer. If, after twenty minutes, parole and probation staff are unable to reach the parolee, the parole supervisor will arrange for two officers to respond to the parolee's

last documented location and, upon finding the parolee, return him or her to custody. If the parolee can't be found, an arrest warrant is issued. Parolees released with GPS monitoring as a condition of parole are required to have a working phone line at their residence and cannot live at a treatment facility or shelter, unless they are provided with their own phone line at the site.

Former Board Member and Longtime Employee, Joyce Hooley, retires

The Parole Board bid a sad farewell to longtime agency employee, Joyce Hooley who retired this month. Ms. Hooley's friendly professionalism, competence, and bright demeanor will be sorely missed by the agency. Ms. Hooley worked with in several different capacities with the agency, including Acting Chairman, Board member, Hearing Examiner, and member of the clemency unit. Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh said that Ms. Hooley's dedication, commitment, and professionalism have always been recognized. "We wish her well as she starts this new chapter in her life," she said.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

The Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery will hold its annual membership and holiday forum on Tuesday, December 12 from 5:45 to 8:30 PM at the Worcester Hotel and Conference Center. For more information, please contact Maryanne Frangules at 617-423-6627, or MOAR-fran@aol.com, or visit the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery website www.neaar.org/moar.

The 17th Annual Interfaith Memorial Service to Commemorate National Homeless Person's Memorial Day will be held on Thursday, December 21 at 2 PM. The service will be held at the Church on the Hill, at 140 Bowdoin Street, across from the State House. For more information, please contact Erin Donohue at 617-367-6447 or edonohue@mhsa.net.